

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing e-mail notification to a user of an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

a customer premise equipment capable to receive an e-mail message information from a data communication network and transmit an alert signal in response to receiving the e-mail message information; and

a remote control notification device for the interactive television system capable to receive the alert signal and to provide notification to a user in response to the alert signal without displaying the e-mail message.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes a set top box.

3. (canceled).

4. (canceled).

5. (canceled).

6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification includes a light signal from the remote control notification device.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification includes a sound signal from the remote control ~~notification~~ device.
8. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the notification includes vibration from the remote control ~~notification~~ device.
9. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the alert signal is capable to penetrate a wall or barrier.
10. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes a transmitter capable to transmit the alert signal.
11. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the remote control ~~notification~~ device includes a receiver capable to receive the alert signal.
12. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the remote control ~~notification~~ device is capable to transmit a control signal that permits execution of an application for processing the received e-mail message ~~information~~.
13. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to detect the received e-mail message ~~information~~.

14. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to display the received e-mail message information.

15. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received e-mail message information.

16. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the remote control notification device is communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment by a wireless link.

17. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the remote control notification device is communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment by a wired link.

18. (original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the wired link is cable wiring.

19. (currently amended) A method of notifying a user of an interactive television system about incoming e-mail messages, the method comprising:

receiving, by a customer premise equipment, an e-mail message information from a data communication network;

in response to the received e-mail message information, sending an alert signal to a remote control notification device for the interactive television system; and

in response to the alert signal, providing notification by the remote control notification device about the received e-mail message information without displaying the e-mail message.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

transmitting a command signal from the notification device to the customer premise equipment to execute an application capable to process the received e-mail message information.

21. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein the customer premise equipment includes a set top box.

22. (canceled).

23. (canceled).

24. (canceled).

25. (currently amended) The method of claim 19 wherein providing notification comprises:

providing a light signal from the remote control notification device.

26. (currently amended) The method of claim 19 wherein providing the notification comprises:

providing a sound signal from the remote control ~~notification~~ device.

27. (currently amended) The method of claim 19 wherein providing the notification comprises:

providing vibration from the remote control ~~notification~~ device.

28. (currently amended) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions to:  
receive, by a customer premise equipment, an instant message ~~information~~ from a data communication network;

in response to the received instant message ~~information~~, send an alert signal to a remote control ~~notification~~ device for an interactive television system; and

in response to the alert signal, provide notification by the remote control ~~notification~~ device about the received instant message ~~information~~ without displaying the instant message.

29. (currently amended) An apparatus for notifying a user of an interactive television system about an incoming instant message, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving an instant message ~~information~~ from a data communication network;

communicatively coupled to the receiving means, means for sending an alert signal in response to the received instant message information; and

communicatively coupled to the receiving means, means for remotely controlling the interactive television system that provides[[ing]] notification about the received instant message information in response to the alert signal.

30. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing message notification to a user of an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

a customer premise equipment capable to receive at least one of an e-mail message and an instant message information from a data communication network and transmit an alert signal in response to receiving the at least one message information, the customer premise equipment including a set top box capable to process the received information; and

a remote control notification device for the interactive television system capable to receive the alert signal and to provide notification to a user in response to the alert signal without displaying the at least one message; [[and]]

~~a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received information;~~

~~wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to detect the received information, and an application capable to display the received information;~~

wherein notification is provided by using at least one signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a sound signal, and a vibration signal.

31. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing notification to a user of an interactive television system about an incoming message, the apparatus comprising:

~~a customer premise equipment capable to receive information transmitted from a data communication network, the customer premise equipment capable to transmit an alert signal in response to receiving the information;~~

~~a notification device capable to provide control signals to control the customer premise equipment, the notification device capable to receive the an alert signal from the interactive television system indicating at least one incoming e-mail message or instant message and process the alert signal to generate a notification related to the received message information without displaying the at least one incoming message;~~  
[[and]]

wherein the notification device includes a first visual indicator to notify the user of an incoming e-mail message and a second visual indicator to notify the user of an incoming instant message

~~a display device communicatively coupled to the customer premise equipment and capable to display the received information;~~

~~wherein the customer premise equipment includes an application capable to detect the received information, and an application capable to display the received information;~~

~~wherein notification is provided by using at least one signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a sound signal, and a vibration signal.~~

32. (currently amended) A method of notifying a user of an interactive television system about an incoming message, the method comprising:

receiving, by a customer premise equipment, at least one of an e-mail message and an instant message information from a data communication network, and storing the at least one received message information;

in response to the at least one received message information, sending an alert signal to a remote control notification device;

receiving and processing the alert signal; and

based upon the alert signal, providing notification by the remote control notification device about the at least one received message information without display of the actual message;

wherein notification is provided by using at least one signal from a group of signals comprising a light signal, a sound signal, and a vibration signal.

33. (new) The method of claim 6, wherein the remote control device includes a specifically-designated LED to provide the light signal.

34. (new) The method of claim 7, wherein the remote control device includes a speaker to provide the sound signal.

35. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the customer premise equipment is capable to receive an instant message from a data communication network and transmit a second alert signal in response to receiving the instant message; and



wherein the remote control device capable to receive the second alert signal and to provide a notification of the instant message to a user in response to the second alert signal, wherein the notification of the instant message is different from the notification of the e-mail message.

36. (new) The method of claim 35, wherein the remote control includes a first LED for providing the notification of the e-mail message and a second LED for providing the notification of the instant message.